



IAF - Doping Risk Assessment

1. Introduction to sport

Aikido is a non-Olympic discipline without any form of competition, ranking or medalling. It is developed in the same period as Kendo and Judo. A time where the founders were seeking to preserve the traditions of the Samurai and its code of honour *Bushido* into the modern world of the 20th Century. Unlike Kendo and Judo, instead of competition, cooperation with a partner was chosen as way to strive for personal Excellence, Respect and Friendship. Aikido is performed on a tatami- the mat which the same as used in Judo- where persons demonstrate the art in couples or with multiple partners. In training the purpose is to train with everyone and to exclude no-one regardless age, sex, grade, or cultural background. In demonstrations the most common format is in couples who are matched together by dan grade and age, normally a mix of combinations of 2 males, 2 females and female-male. Each couple showcase a specific basic technique where to by turn perform the technique on the partner. The one who perform is called, tori. The one who receives the technique is called, uke. The format of 1 tori and multiple ukes is also used, which demonstrate the application of Aikido in a multiple attack situation.

As such Aikido has become a discipline which is been practiced now in more than 140 countries. Aikido itself is represented by two main organizations:

- The **Aikikai**, which is responsible for the global training system and standards, the grading (curriculum for dan-ranking system), the spiritual matters in Aikido: Ai = harmony, Ki= energy, Do = the Way, and to be the caretaker for Aikido as Japanese Budo.
- The **IAF**, which is since 1976 member of **GAISF-now Sportaccord**, **AIMS** and **IWGA** and as such representing the discipline within the international community of sport and responsible for the international sport manifestations every 4 years in the form of demonstration by country teams and in events as part of the World- and Combat Games. As a member of Sportaccord, the IAF is entrusted with the performance of WADA-related obligations pertaining to Aikido. Since the beginning of the WorldGames, the IAF took part in the World Games as a demonstration Sport with the last edition in 2023, in Riyadh. Currently the IAF has over 80 members.

From a cultural point of view, Aikido, being a Japanese Budo, is embedded in a value system which strongly discourages any dishonest behaviour in presenting or performing the art. That absolutely includes doping. The ethical code inherent to Aikido is to be pure and to express and present the purity of oneself on the mat. As a Budo, discipline and authority are key elements. At the head of Aikido is the Doshu, caretaker and guardian of the art. The current Doshu is Moriteru Ueshiba, grandson of the Founder. The culture in the Aikido Community is characterized by creating Friendship, mutual respect (and its own body) and creating Personal Excellence by cooperation instead of competition. As a Japanese Budo, its inner core and values are carefully protected both by the Aikikai and the IAF, against any corruption or existence of competition of any kind, which is perceived as a threat to the Art. In being also a movement discipline emphasizing the integration of Body & Mind - scientific studies as Szabolcs et al. (2017) also reflect both aspects of this practice, it is nowadays embedded in a value system of promoting a healthy and meaningful lifestyle.

1.1 Disciplines/Categories

As an international demonstration sport, it has developed since 2009 the following format to present itself in the World- and Combat Games.

Member of the Founding Family		
7-8 th dan	Masters	Age 60+
5-6 th dan	Experts	Age 45+
2-4 th dan	Participants	Age 18-45
1st dan or less	Talents	Age 12-17

The Masters and Experts are appointed for the event by the IAF, in close communication with the Aikikai. The pool of Aikidoka's who represent the athletic/sportive part of Aikido, are appointed - within a quota set by the IAF – by the member countries of the IAF. By this procedure of appointment, no selection by a jury or judges are involved. There is no competition or ranking involved to get appointment, nor does the appointment grant any access to ranking of higher grade. Appointment is done without any competition, based on each national federation's own discretionary appreciation. Every country is also asked to appoint a reserve in case of inability to come or injury. During the events there is no jury, judges, or national coaches involved. There is no rating system or competition of any kind and the position of Aikido as a demonstration (only) discipline is always emphasized.

Such an event is scheduled again in Tokyo, Japan, in 2024 in combination with a small-scale international event for Talents. Talents are defined by youngsters between the age of 12-17 years old with a dan grade of 1st dan or less. Besides that, every 4 years, the IAF organises a demonstration event, normally in Japan, where the members present themselves in country-teams. Again, no jury, judges or national coaches are involved. In 2012 and in 2016, a small-scale testing was executed by the Japanese NADO. The IAF is not involved in the appointment procedure of the National members in making their teams. There is no instance where the use of prohibited substances or methods could increase or influence one's chance of being appointed.

This format is now the benchmark for the organization of the IAF Congress which is held every 4 years. The next one will be in Tokyo, 2024. During the congress about 2000 Aikidoka's of all categories- including the Board of Directors of the IAF - will train together in an International Friendship seminar. The congress is concluded with the demonstration by member nation teams of Aikidoka's in a Japanese

traditional event, called the Embukai. The seminar is a **Sports-for-All Event**. As Aikido promotes training for everyone, regardless of age, sex, dan or whatever, registration for the seminar is open for any Aikidoka who is motivated to come. The member nation teams for the Embukai are appointed by their national organizations of origin, without any guidelines given by the IAF. Due to the character of the seminar as a Sport-for-All Event, for this type of Event Doping and Doping Control, developed in the context of Elite Sport by competition, has no meaning at all and therefore not in the scope of the Doping Risk Assessment. The scope of the Doping Risk Assessment is therefore not focused on the Performance factor, but on the health risk assessment involved in the extreme unlikely case of using Doping.

2. Physiological risk category

2.1 Physical demands of Aikido as Demonstration Sport

On the level of athletes, the performance is in physical sense challenging. Endurances, stamina, being athletic, flexibility in relation to moderate physical strength are required. On this level, the art has the appearance on the one hand of being very dynamic and sporty. But on the other hand, on this level, athletes are asked to perform basic techniques within the duration of 2-3 minutes. Experts are asked to show advanced Aikido techniques within the timeframe of maximum 5 minutes and the Masters are asked to perform Free style without time constraints.

To perform the art well, partners of expert, the ukes are in general on the athlete level, and chosen by the experts and themselves. On the next level, the Masters tend to perform their technique, with experts as uke.

Executing the techniques means immobilisation and throwing techniques, which involves fall-breaking by the ukes. It is emphasized and trained, that the higher in rank, the less physical force is used or needed, to execute the techniques. In technical and physical sense, the goal in Aikido is that any-body (regardless seize, weight, age, and sex) can throw or immobilize any other body. The way “how to do that”, is to be able to use the force of the “uke” as a leverage with the body you have, is the technical part of the Way. This is the domain of the technically skilled experts of the art, where in technical sense, difficult techniques, are performed in such way that it looks easy.

The ultimate aim is doing-by-not-doing, where in the technique no physical strength is imposed on the partner. On that level, the partner is thrown or immobilized by natural weight and the use of intention only and internal energy, the ki (S. Tsuyoshi,2009) only... This is the domain of the Masters. So strangely enough, the older you become in practise, the less physical strength is required and the better you become in performing the Art. This is common for other disciplines in the domain of the so called, integration of Body & Mind- like Yoga and Tai-Chi, whereby aging the loss of physical strength and physical stamina is compensated by the increase of the mastering internal energy- the Ki. Disciplines in which you can become a master of the discipline by mastering this internal energy.

In this sense Aikido is to be physically described on the crossroads op two paradigm’s: the Western one – common in sports - emphasising VO₂max and the Eastern one – not common in sports-centred around the concept of Ki. It is said (Vriesman, 2013) that Aikido is using a hybrid energy system: Aikido= VO₂max + Ki. Generation and accumulating Ki is generally connected to special breathing techniques, which can be seen as a different and perhaps extra way to generate and accumulate of O₂ in the human system then by physical training only (*).

At the athlete level the VO2 max is a physical focus; to have enough stamina and endurance to maintain performing for 2-3 minutes effortless. At the Master level the training and performing focus has shifted to the domain of Ki.

Considering this description of the physical demands in terms of power and strength, cardiovascular and muscular endurance, the physiological risk that Doping is used Aikido is extremely low, even close to zero. By maturing into an expert and later a masters, the physical demands in terms of power and strength, cardiovascular and muscular endurance are not the primary focus of training and performing anymore...it is about expressing the flow- of- Ki in the movement in such a way that it appears effortless, which cannot be achieved with the prohibited substances on the Anti-Doping list of WADA.

2.2 Performance-enhancing substances and methods

Considering the physiological requirements of the sport, the possible scenarios for using prohibited substances and methods (WADA classification) are extremely limited in Aikido. There is an extremely low probability to use substances which increase strength like *Anabolic Agents* (S1), or which enhance cardiovascular like *Peptide hormones, growth factors, related substances, and mimetics* (S2); since strength and cardiovascular do not appear as limited factors to perform. However, and given the advanced age of some aikidokas, these substances may be part of an anti-aging medicine to sustain a functional efficiency. We may also question and consider the utility of substances like *Stimulants* (S6) to enhance concentration, alertness, or *Beta-blockers* (P1) to increase concentration, coordination.

2.3 TDSSA

More than specify the Minimum Level of Analysis (MLA) for the Prohibited Substances within this scope (Erythropoietin Stimulating Agents, Human Growth Hormones and Human Growth Hormones Releasing Factors) for each sport-discipline, TDSSA could be used as a more general risk scale. Indexing Aikido in the table which adds ESAs, GHs and GHRFs percentage (see below) reflects the sport risk level and allows us to spread sports-disciplines in three groups (Low-Medium-High risks).

- ESAs - Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agents (e.g., recombinant erythropoietin and their analogues).
- GH - Human Growth Hormone.
- GHRFs - Growth Hormone Releasing Factors including Growth Hormone Releasing Hormone (GHRH) and its analogues, Growth Hormone Secretagogues (GHS) and Growth Hormone Releasing Peptides (GHRPs).

``They are prohibited in sports due to their performance-enhancing properties: Erythropoietin (EPO) is a hormone regulating the synthesis of red blood cells, thus increasing the ability of blood to carry oxygen, and therefore it and its analogues (ESAs) could be used by athletes in endurance sport. Growth hormone (GH) and Growth hormone releasing hormones (GHRH) which induce growth hormone (GH) secretion - due to GH anabolic effect.

In Aikido the performances are very short in duration and taking substances to increase the endurance of athletes (as ESA) is pointless. In addition, your ART uses the movement of the attacker with redirection of the force of the attack, without countering or blocking, i.e., in Aikido there is no resistance, no attacking, no injury, no competition. No increase in strength (implying the use of GH and GHRFs) is necessary. The very philosophy of Aikido is self-improvement, achieving harmony with

oneself, with the people around, and with nature, which in itself rejects the use of substances and methods to improve achievements. (1)

SPORT	DISCIPLINE	ESAs %	GHs %	GHRF s%	SUM	Risk level
Aikido	Aikido	0	0	0	0	LOW

3. Political and financial risk category

3.1 Country Ranking

Without competitions, Aikido doesn't have a country ranking. The performance of the athletes is for its/their own sake, and there is no measurement, judging, or any form of competition of the performance involved. Aikido, while conducting demonstrations, does not judge the performance of the athletes by scores or points. So, there is no judges or referees involved in demonstrations.

3.2 Doping history in sport/discipline per country

For the period 2013 to 2023, we have identified in the ADRVs reports only one ADRV and it was a non-analytical Anti-Doping Rule Violation (2015) for a Romanian athlete, who polluted the investigation by doing a form of competition Aikido, which is not part of the IAF, and by mistake was counted as part of the IAF. Nowadays in Russia, competition Aikido is promoted by the Russian Sport Authorities, under the name Universal Aikido, founded by Steven Siegel, as a tool for war. It is very clear, that such a development which is against the spirit of the Olympic Charter and the Spirit of Aikido is not accepted at all within the IAF.

3.3 Financial rewards and incentives

Aikido is not considered as an Elite Sport and is not taking part in the Olympics or Paralympics. Aikido Athletes are not being paid or supported by Public Finance and there is no financial gain connected to the performance of the athletes. There are no sponsors for, or sponsor contracts with the athletes. No Public money is connected to the individual athlete. Since there is no winner, Aikido is also not exposed to the danger of betting. In general, there are no financial incentives as a motive to use Doping. Thus, social and symbolic recognitions in the Aikido community seems to be the only incentive for aikidokas.

3.4. Other considerations

In Aikido, state sponsorship doesn't exist. Although some countries have known to have a history of Doping with other discipline, this is not the case with Aikido. The last two Combat Games were hosted in China and Russia. No incidents concerning political interferences with the participation of Aikido to the event occurred. Also, there is no cases known of a paid transfer of citizenship of an Aikidoka. On a national level, all the current (and future) 81 members NF's, are mandatory recognized by the Aikikai, and therefore there is a global unity in training and grading standards. Membership of

the IF is linked to membership of the NFs to membership of the National Sport Federation and/or NOC of their country in majority of cases that Aikido is nationally accepted as a discipline of Sport, and on a national level are considered beyond the need of testing. None of the NF's are submitted to a national doping testing program for their athletes.

4. Cultural and environmental risk category

4.1 Relevant calendar considerations

IAF is responsible for the international sport manifestations every 4 years in the form of demonstration by country teams and takes part in the World Games (every four years, next in 2025) and the Combat Games.

4.2 Anti-Doping Education

From a moral standpoint and from an educational point of view we enhance fully the concept of a Doping Free Sport, and therefore we start implementing an education program for our athletes and talent primarily focused on Health and not the enhancement of Performance, which in Aikido is meaningless. From an Educational point on view as being part of Sport accord, we seek for a way of compliancy with the WADA code which fits to our discipline by focusing on the health risk of Doping. No scientific study on the effects or use of Doping in Aikido has been done. Aikido has never been submitted to an out of event testing and no Aikidoka has ever had to fill Whereabouts.

Reference:

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Tsuyoshi S et al, (2009). "Philosophy, Psychology, Physics and Practise of Ki, Evidence Based Complementary Medicine, June 2009;6(2): 175-183.

Vriesman W. (2013). "The use of Ki in Sports", lecture during an International Coach Congress, National Sports Centre, Papendal, the Netherlands. (7th dan Aikido, MSc. Movement Sciences, University of Amsterdam)

(*) www.wimhofmethode.com. An example of breathing techniques to generate energy which has been scientific proven to enhance the endurance and the resilience of the Body.

(1) `Prof. Albena Alexandrova, PhD,
Institute of Neurobiology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
23 Acad. G. Bonchev St.
1113 Sofia,
Bulgaria

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